

## Injury Fact Sheet



# Orchard workers – Fall Injuries

1,095 orchard workers were seriously injured falling from elevated surfaces in the years 2000-2004. 997 (86%) of these falls involved ladders.



These injuries were so serious that the workers had to take time off work to recover or in some cases, were permanently disabled. Serious injuries are costly and affect your industrial insurance premiums. They contribute to the reason for the base rate of \$0.55 per hour per employee paid by orchard employers in 2006. If your company has a higher than average number of injuries (claims), your “experience rating” could increase by as much as 25% in one year to \$0.67 per hour per employee.

At first, it may not seem like much but consider this: if you had 5 full-time workers and had an average number of injuries (claims), you would pay about \$5,500 in premiums in 2006. If your experience rating increased by 25% because you had higher than average injuries, you would pay about \$6,700 in premiums, or \$1,200 more in 2006.

## Causes of fall injuries

Workers fall off ladders for a variety of reasons:

- ◆ the ladder moves, falls over, or is set up improperly; or
- ◆ the worker slips on the rungs, over-reaches, or carries objects while climbing the ladder.

Workers fall off other elevated surfaces such as steps or stairs, roofs, trees, vehicles, equipment, and other miscellaneous items.



Stay on the ladder to avoid a serious fall injury!

## Ways to prevent fall injuries

Ladder safety is important because ladders are constantly used in orchards. Here are some basic rules for use:

- ◆ Inspect and replace any ladder that is damaged.
- ◆ Set up the ladder securely. Make sure the base is stable to keep it from slipping, moving, or falling.
- ◆ Make sure the back leg of a tripod orchard ladder is properly and firmly placed to prevent collapsing.
- ◆ Use both hands when climbing up and down the ladder.
- ◆ Keep shoes and ladder steps/rungs dry and clean of mud, dirt, fruit debris, or any substances that would make them slippery or hazardous.
- ◆ Do not stand on the top two steps of the ladder.
- ◆ Do not step off the ladder onto branches of trees except onto the main crotch.
- ◆ Do not over-reach. Move the ladder as needed to safely reach the work.



Make sure base is firmly placed and stable.